



MUTUAL RESPECT

We were taught to salute our superior officers. We were taught to salute the flag. But we didn't salute each other. Because we were equals. That didn't mean we were the same. We came from small towns, we came from cities...some of us came from nothing. We just got thrown together. We didn't pick each other. We had plenty of reasons not to get along. They gave us all the same haircuts, the same uniforms. We received the same orders and ate the same food. We were still different. There was never any rule in the Air Force that said you had to like the person who might one day save your life. But we respected each other. No matter what, you respect each other. There are things you don't do, lines you don't cross. Between men and women. Between men and men, women and women, officer and enlisted. Your weaknesses do not come before your country's expectations. We're all Airmen. Mutual respect is given. And the only color you have to worry about is the color under your skin running through your veins. And if you ever have to see that color up close, like we did, you'll feel like a fool for ever even having any of that other garbage in your head. We're all Airmen. You may not be required to salute your equals, but you will honor their courage and sacrifice with respect. We are every pilot, every mechanic, every nurse, every combat controller, missile defender, dirt dog, master sergeant and four-star general that has ever sworn to be our nation's sword and shield. We are men and women from every background you can ever hope to imagine, and we have lived and died so that you can stand together, shoulder-to-shoulder, and proudly call yourselves Airmen. For what you do every day you put on that uniform, we salute you. Aim high, Airman.